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ABSTRACT

This document contains the papers presented at the 1966-67 annual midwinter meeting of the School and College Conference on English. The titles and authors are: "A Report on the Urban Language Study Project" by J. L. Dillard; "Creolized American English, Some Problems and Solutions" by Melvin J. Fox; "Recent Changes in American English" by Albert H. Marckwardt; "Authors on Campus" by Jerre Mangione; and "Computer Evaluation of Student Prose" by Arthur Daigon. Also included are the treasurer's report for 1966-67 and a proposed system of rotation for college representatives to the executive committee of the conference from 1966 to 1972. (JM)

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REPORT
of
School and College Conference
on English

ANNUAL MID-WINTER MEETING

2

PROGRAM

FRIDAY

7:45 p.m.

Business Meeting

8:00-8:30 p.m.

A REPORT ON THE URBAN LANGUAGE STUDY PROJECT
PROFESSOR J. L. DILLARD
Director, Urban Language Study Program,
Center for Applied Linguistics
Washington, D.C.

8:30-9:00 p.m.

CREOLIZED AMERICAN ENGLISH, SOME PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS
MELVIN J. FOX
Associate Director, The Ford Foundation

9:00-10:00 p.m.

RECENT CHANGES IN AMERICAN ENGLISH
PROFESSOR ALBERT H. MARCKWARDT
Princeton University
President, National Council of Teachers of English

SATURDAY

9:30-10:30 a.m.

AUTHORS ON CAMPUS
PROFESSOR JERRE MANGIONE
University of Pennsylvania

10:30-11:30 a.m.

COMPUTER EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROSE
PROFESSOR ARTHUR DAIGON
The University of Connecticut

12:15 p.m.

Luncheon – Hewitt Hall

Note: In both the Friday and Saturday programs about one quarter of the time has been reserved for questions from the floor and discussion.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

School and College Conference on English

1966 - 1967

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Hunter College

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PROPOSED SYSTEM OF ROTATION FOR COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SCHOOL AND COLLEGE CONFERENCE

YEAR / COLLEGE	66-7	67-8	68-9	69-70	70-1	71-2
Amherst	X			X	X	
*Barnard	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bennington	X			X	X	
Brandeis			X	X		
Bowdoin		X	X			X
Brown		X	X			X
Bryn Mawr	X	X			X	X
Central Connecticut	X	X			X	X
Colby	X	X			X	X
Colgate			X	X		
Columbia	X			X	X	
Connecticut		X	X			X
Cornell	X			X	X	
Dartmouth		X	X			X
Dickinson		X	X			X
Harvard		X	X			X
Haverford	X			X	X	
Hunter	X	X			X	X
Massachusetts	X	X			X	X
Middlebury			X	X		
Mount Holyoke		X	X			X
N.Y.U.	X			X	X	
Rutgers	X			X	X	
Simmons		X	X			X
Pennsylvania			X	X		
Smith	X			X	X	
Swarthmore		X	X			X
Tufts			X	X		
Vassar	X	X			X	X
Wellesley		X	X		X	X
Wesleyan	X			X	X	
Wheaton	X	X			X	X
Williams			X	X		
Yale	X			X	X	
TOTAL	18	18	17	18	19	18

* *Host School*

TREASURER'S REPORT — 1966-67

RECEIPTS

2-14-66	Victor Reid	$ 1.75
3- 2-66	Dues	60.00
3- 2-66	Sale of annual reports	24.00
4-29-66	Dues	10.00
6- 9-66	Dues	10.00
10- 6-66	Dues	200.00
10-12-66	Dues	490.00
10-12-66	U. of Hawaii—annual reports	60.00
10-17-66	Dues	320.00
10-21-66	Dues	230.00
10-27-66	Dues	190.00
11- 5-66	Dues	130.00
12- 2-66	Dues	190.00
1-11-67	Dues	70.00
1-27-67	Dues	170.00
2- 2-67	Dues	40.00
2- 6-67	Accumulated interest on savings account	190.37
	TOTAL RECEIPTS	$2,386.12
	CASH BALANCE—2-10-66	3,347.50
	TOTAL	$5,733.62

DISBURSEMENTS

2-15-66	Postage	$ 10.00
2-17-66	Roger K. Applebee—Honorarium and exp.	328.93
2-17-66	Burton Randall—Honorarium and exp.	183.16
3- 1-66	E. A. Hall—Printing	36.00

3- 2-66	Men's Faculty Club—Ex. Comm. Dinner	120.56
3- 2-66	Alan Downer—Honorarium	100.00
3- 2-66	Ralph Sargent—Honorarium and exp.	120.70
3- 7-66	Barnard College—Coffee hour	33.94
3- 7-66	Barnard College—Rental College Parlor	100.00
3-10-66	Miss Sally Longstreth—Postage, etc.	23.55
3-10-66	Alan Downer—Expenses	6.45
7-14-66	Miss Sally Longstreth—Postage	24.67
7-21-66	Cedar Tree Press—Annual Report	468.00
9-19-66	Northfield-Mt. Hermon—Address labels	2.55
9-22-66	Lewis Wood—Postage	29.20
9-29-66	Northfield-Mt. Hermon—Member list	2.55
10-10-66	E. A. Hall—Printing billheads	12.31
11- 5-66	The Biltmore—Executive meeting	98.81
11- 5-66	Miss Sally Longstreth—Secretary's stipend	150.00
12- 2-66	J. E. Baldwin—Treasurer's stipend	300.00
1-15-67	Northfield-Mt. Hermon—Address labels	2.55
1-26-67	Checking Account—Service charges	6.37
TOTAL		$2,172.80

Total Cash	$5,733.62
Total Disbursements	2,172.80
Cash Balance—2-6-67	$3,560.82
Plus Series "E" Gov't Bonds (maturity value)	$ 325.00

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN E. BALDWIN, Sec'y-Treasurer

A REPORT ON THE URBAN LANGUAGE STUDY PROJECT

By J. L. DILLARD

My speech will perhaps not fit so well into Dr. Ashmead's outline as will Dr. Marckwardt's and perhaps even Mr. Fox's. What I am going to talk about is in no real sense a new development in English, although the attention which it has begun to get in recent years is quite new.

The "culturally disadvantaged Negro of a lower socio-economic stratum"—to use a somewhat deadly but perhaps necessary stereotyped phrase—presents a *new* language problem only in that the attempt to cope with it is new. Programs like the Urban Language Study, which I am representing here, give away the situation as well by their titles as in any other way. The language problem has been in the past—and most likely still remains—greater in the rural South, where Negroes suffer the disadvantages that a non-valued culture and a different dialect impose upon them in urban areas. But, for a hundred years or more, we have paid no attention to the disadvantaged *rural* Negro, and we will probably continue to pay little attention to him. It is only when the Negro congregates in the urban slums of Washington in numbers great enough to attract the attention of congressmen, in Watts in numbers great enough to make his riots almost impossible of control, or in the schools of any other great city in great enough numbers to cause inconvenience to prominent (and well-paid) educators that he begins to be something to be dealt with. Thus, I shall talk mainly about the new study of a rather old problem.

There have been for a hundred or so years, as there certainly are now, Negroes whose dialect and whose culture have been Standard American, who have differed from the mainstream, middle-class white only in color—and perhaps in bank balance. John Griffin in *Black Like Me*—it seems well to deal in such examples when addressing a literature-oriented group like this—reports, probably with complete accuracy, how he moved in the Negro group, at least so far as white prejudice in the South was concerned, only by changing his color. But it has not always been so. The more favored Negroes (mulattoes, usually, and most commonly the descendants of house servants—or of liaisons between house servants and masters) looked down upon the less favored black people (descendants of the field slaves). There were, for example, the New Orleans "Creoles" of whom Johnny St-Cyr said (quoted in Alan Lomax's *Mr. Jelly Roll*,) "the mulattoes were actually more prejudiced than the white people at that time." The Jim Crow laws in the South threw yellow, brown, and black together—and the *de facto* segregation practices of the North did little to change that arrangement—into a kind of caste system (untouchable caste in the South), but there remained class distinctions even in the caste. And, most likely, there were class dialects within that same group at all times. But within one socio-economic group in the Negro community, one which is generally as easy to delineate as social groups ever are, there is a remarkably homogeneous dialect throughout the nation, although of course there are minor local differences.

The Urban Language Study grew out of a combination of the recognition of an educational need with an insight made by a small group of linguists—essentially Caribbeanists—into the nature of U.S. Negro English as related to the Creole dialects of the Caribbean. It is only fair to admit that, concurrently, other linguists, like William Labov of Columbia and Raven McDavid of Chicago, were perceiving the possibility of a linguistic barrier in the education of the urban Negro; nevertheless, we at the Urban Language Study can probably take the credit or blame, as the case may be, for the most extreme position regarding the difference between Non-Standard Negro English (NNE) and standard English. The difference, we feel, is a basic matter, relating to the really root matters of language structure, not just to the periphery. (A good example of peripheral differences would be any one of many white "non-standard" dialects, wherein the differences are minor ones like the use of *ain't* for *is not* and of *brung* for *brought*.) William Stewart was the one who coined the phrase *quasi-foreign* language, and it remains the best label which we have for the situation.

It turns out that the "foreignness" of NNE is much more extreme among children than among adults. Children in the population we are studying, especially children around five or six, have structures so different from standard English as, for example, gender-neutral reference of pronouns. *(He a nice little girl)*. These are not language acquisition forms, since standard speaking children sort out such matters very early, if they are ever problems in language acquisition. A standard-speaking child two and one-half years old, with no unusual linguistic ability, will have sex reference sorted out already. We refuse to accept any racist theory about this being caused by inherent lack of language or other ability in the Negro population and look elsewhere for the explanation.

Now it happens that many of the world's languages do not differentiate between masculine and feminine *in the pronoun system*. (So far, no language community has been found to be less proficient than any other in the *biological* recognition of sex differences, and there are other grammatical devices for the expression of that perception outside the pronoun system.) Among those languages are the Creole languages of the Caribbean, which we believe to be related to the NNE dialect. We suspect, then, that the historical difference is reflected in the age-grading, with the younger population retaining the more archaic forms. This is perhaps a somewhat extreme hypothesis, and it will yet require a lot of proving, but we believe that the outlines of the situation are now becoming reasonably clear for the first time.

Of course, there are many grammatical differences which are not so sensational as the sex-reference matter. For example, there is the way of marking the plural of nouns: *16 bottle*, but *the bottles;* Stewart calls this non-redundancy in the noun plural system. (Redundancy to the linguist does not mean quite what it does to the non-linguist or especially to the English teacher; I could not now be communicating with you over the slight amount of background noise if it were not for the redundancy built into standard English as into all languages.) The unwary, or linguistically unsophisticated, person who hears first *bottle* and then *bottles* in what are, for him, equivalent plural situations, may easily conclude that the dialect is simply unsystematic. The same thing may be said of *He sick* (temporarily) and *He be sick* (for a long time). We

may too easily conclude that the Negro dialect utilizes zero or *be* haphazardly as a substitute for *is;* but if we look at the Creole dialects, we find that alternation between "zero copula" and a durative aspect marker (often *de* or something like it, but the actual phonological forms is the least important part of it), we may come to expect the same pattern in NNE. As a matter of fact, *He sick* negates as *He ain't sick*, and the negative question is *Ain't he sick? He be sick* negates as *He don't be sick*, and the negative question is *Don't he be sick?*

It is easy to take NNE grammatical forms, in isolation, as slight deviations from standard English—caused by "sloppiness", or "careless", or whatever. Leaving aside the linguists' oft-reiterated objection that such attitudes are not objectively observable in the regular linguistic behavior of any group of people, we can see that, when considered in the larger context of a group of related sentences, these forms have their own kind of patterning. It is just that the *patterning* of the items in NNE differs more greatly from standard English than do the individual items themselves. For the Creolist, this is nothing new. The individual *items* in Haitian Creole differ little from those of French, but the *patterns* are altogether different. The same is true of Papiamento compared to Spanish or Portuguese, and of many other such Afro-American language relationships. The anthropologist Herskovits first pointed this out as long ago as 1936 (*Suriname Folk-Lore*, and elsewhere) but of course he did not do it in the tight, mathematically exact form in which Marvin D. Loflin, an Indiana-trained transformationalist, and others at ULS are doing it.

This tendency of the difference in the systems to be obscured by the resemblance among individual items gives rise to a very interesting phenomenon observable in the failure of standard-speaking people to perceive the amount of difference there is in the NNE dialect. I have called this phenomenon *masking*. The Negro non-standard speaker, in the adjustment which he must necessarily make to mainstream American society and language although he is not now given the guidance to enable him to make it effectively, eliminates from his speech the more "bizarre" form from the ethnocentric view of the speaker of standard. As a child, he may express a kind of anterior form of *see* by *I been see it* (or *saw it*, or *seen it*, or *seed it*—again it is the pattern and not the items which is important)—or a continuous anterior form by *I been seeing that every day for a long time*. Under pressure from the mainstream speaker, he may give up the *I been see* form; usually he does this about the age of 14 or 15, several years later than he changes his gender reference system for the pronoun. But he tends to keep the *I been seeing* form, possibly because it may be taken for *I've been seeing*, of which it is an almost exact translation, with a "lightly articulated" auxiliary from *have*. In more complex sentence formations, the more non-standard form will also have a greater chance of survival. *He don't be joking* as a complete sentence is perhaps unlikely, *but If you ask me I think he don't be joking* — or, rather, since any sentence is statistically unlikely in any language, a sentence with analogous structure — is quite likely. Among the more trivial consequences of this situation is that Negro college students who got by the entrance exams easily enough turn up with radically non-standard forms when they get involved in freshman composition. And the stereotyped answer from the linguistically naive is that they are "incapable of handling complex thought."

Educationally speaking, however, the real tragedy is that of the ghetto Negro child who never makes it to college, or even to junior high school, because of the dialect barrier. He comes to elementary school, to learn the quite basic skill of reading, when he is six or seven—that is, when he has least benefit of the process of age-grading in the direction of standard English. Obviously, he cannot call now upon the language "skills" which he will have later; he tries to read a foreign language which he is not even told is foreign to his own system, and of course he often fails to learn. If, by the age of fourteen, his language has changed radically in the direction of standard English, he still has that disorientation to reading which he developed earlier. And, of course, he very probably has been passed on to higher grades where reading of very complex materials, depending upon skills which were supposed to have been taught to him in earlier grades, is demanded of him. This is not to say that language disorientation is the only factor in the high dropout rate of Negro children—obviously, there are many others, most of them cultural in nature—but it certainly is a bigger factor than has been generally recognized.

In dealing with this education problem, the Urban Language Study has emphasized two branches of attack: Research, and materials development. The research is the basic thing, for us. We need thorough authentication of our impressions concerning age grading before we can seriously claim, even in scholarly journals, that this is the case. Obviously, the results of this research will be of basic importance for the materials development. The research aims may be seen to be especially ambitious when it is considered that no such age-grading study has so far been done for standard English (or for any other language, so far as I am aware).

The materials development aim is more narrowly pedagogical in nature. So far, we have been using a doctrinaire English as a second language approach in materials tested in the D.C. public schools, and it has worked surprisingly well. We are constantly told that it will need modification, and a statement made by so many may well be true. There is also the problem of how such materials are to be used in the now-integrated schools, where a NNE speaker may be learning to read alongside a standard-speaking middle class white or Negro student. We have no pat answers to these questions, although computerized education and programmed instruction have been suggested—and the non-graded school offers a possible solution in less mechanically monstrous terms. But the main thing which we believe we have to offer is an understanding of the problem itself. To an audience of scholars and educators, this aim may perhaps not seem to be a trivial one.

CREOLIZED AMERICAN ENGLISH

Some Problems and Solutions

By MELVIN J. FOX

I will not try to address myself to the scholarly or pedagogical aspects of creolized American English. That is the mission of those like Dr. Joseph Dillard and William Stewart[1] who are gathering the empirical evidence needed to bring understanding of the character of the problem; like William Labov, working on this problem in New York City;[2] Dale Crowley, working on the problem in Hawaii;[3] Lawrence Caroline, working on it in Michigan;[4] Nelson Francis and Beryl Bailey, working on it in Mississippi;[5] Raven McDavid and William Austin, working on it in Chicago;[6] Roger Shuy, working on it in Detroit;[7] Charles Hurst at Howard University;[8] and Juanita V. Williamson, working in Memphis.[9] And I certainly am not in a position to suggest solutions; the long, slow process that may lead to solutions must await a sharper definition of the problem.

However, as a foundation executive, I am in the business of searching out new developments and helping to get support for their developers—as in the case of Urban Language Study Program. The Foundation has a very substantial interest in language as a key factor in the development of communities and societies, and has supported work on it in a variety of ways over fifteen years in the U.S. and in countries throughout the world[10]—in schools in our cities and those of the developing countries of Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. This extensive exposure and experience leads to the suspicion that the problem faced by the Ministry of Education in Kenya in identifying a language that can unify its people while sustaining their feeling of identity with their group and serving their educational needs, is similar to the task of bridging the chasm that exists in Jamaica and Trinidad between the vast majority of the population that lives and operates in Creole and the thin upper-crust of the leadership, including most school teachers and all those who prepare and mark school-leaving and college-entrance exams, who have no knowledge of the real language differences of the Creole-speaking population. I have a hunch that those problems in many ways are similar to the language crisis with which we find ourselves confronted increasingly in our own national Capitol where Dr. Dillard is working, and in most of our large cities.

At a meeting in Kenya recently a member of the Ministry of Education which has been unusually progressive in its systematic efforts in recent years to apply modern methods to improve school instruction in English as the principal language of wider communication, asked a question that cuts to the heart of the matter: "Just think of my dilemma—I do not have a language for my family. My wife and I speak two different non-communicable Kenya languages. We both have command of Swahili and that effectively meets our needs, but neither can communicate with our in-laws. Our children speak English to me, Swahili to the servants, and cannot communicate with their grandparents at all. Not only does this deeply grieve the grandparents but it divides our family. When I speak Swahili to my children, they answer me in English. If a servant or

someone in what they consider a lower social or economic class spoke to them in English, they would answer in Swahili. How can I find a language to restore our family?" My hunch is that this man's problem is shared by other men in many countries, including our own, who want their children to have access to maximum educational opportunities while retaining their family and community roots. It is shared in part because in so many cities—in Jakarta, Manila, New Delhi, Dacca, Lagos, Kampala, Tokyo, Tel Aviv, Stellenbosch (in South Africa)—English is either *the* language of higher instruction, or indispensable to pursuit of higher studies.[11]

I think I might best contribute to an examination and discussion of this problem if I briefly sketched some of the past activities and future goals of the Foundation in the language fields. Perhaps this in turn will point to elements that must be present for identification of the solutions for creolizing American English so boldly proclaimed in my title—and so critically needed in classrooms in many major cities throughout the world.

Having spent the last fifteen years helping to develop and carry out aspects of Ford Foundation's vast international program interests, I have seen a transformation of the international sector of American universities—a transformation with respect to the character and complexity of the subject matter, and with respect to the way scholars and their universities have organized to deal with international problems. There has been a redefinition of the internal concepts and external boundaries of various social science disciplines. In this period the Foundation has been heavily engaged in trying to help developing societies train their leaders and build the institutions that can assure their people the benefits of independent, and "modern" societies. To achieve this we have had to engage the interests of American scholars in analyzing the processes of change in the developing societies, and to find new tools to help emerging nations assess their needs and plan their futures. Nowhere is the effect of the impact of these new demands placed by underdeveloped societies (or underdeveloped communities) on traditional scholarly concepts and analytical tools more sharply manifest than in relation to problems of language.

Post World War II concern for language learning problems was sparked in part by the war-stimulated need to develop new high-pressure techniques for teaching unfamiliar foreign languages—techniques that first involved description of the target languages, and then development of training procedures based on an awareness of the interference factors between that language and the learners. A new conception of language learning, and a new type of language teaching emerged based on the awareness that learning a language is not an intellectual process but is as much a matter of forming a special system of habits as achieving skill in a sport, and the realization that the capacity to respond to phonemic, morphemic, tonal, structural and other language factors in the target language were as important to the learning process as those deep-rooted aspects of the learner's own language. Thus, the process of teaching Hindi to someone whose native language was Spanish was recognized as a problem quite different than teaching Hindi to someone who spoke English; and the same process also revealed that teaching English to children who heard English in their homes was quite a different problem than teaching English to children who heard some

other language—who so to speak swam in some other language sea outside of the classroom.

However, it was not until our linguists began in the early Fifties to apply their knowledge of language analysis and description to the problem of teaching English as a foreign or second language in Japan, in the Philippines, in Turkey, in Afghanistan, in India, in Nigeria, in Indonesia; or in the Sixties to the problem of helping countries like Kenya to determine which language, or languages, of wider communication could best serve their developmental and educational goals and the form of language engineering required to achieve the determined goals—it was not until linguists and language specialists began to be faced and involved with such matters overseas that they began to realize that these critical language problems existed in socio-political settings, that in assessing them linguistics would have to widen its scope from a scientific to a behavioural discipline. They could not help developing countries define and carry out new language policies without the intellectual and analytical assistance of sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, psychologists, and even economists. Thus psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics have become vital concepts and tools within the last few years, in part as a result of the linguists' involvement with the critical language problems faced by new nations. From an almost exclusive concern with describing how languages worked, one finds widespread concern among leading linguists about Language Problems in Developing Nations—the title and theme of a conference held recently in Warrenton, Virginia, with participants from all parts of the world.[12]

The Foundation's international programs have played a major role in all of the developments sketched above: i.e., building resources into our universities before the emergence of the National Defense Education Act of 1958, for teaching the critical unfamiliar languages; helping develop the tools and institutions for improved teaching of English in many countries in Latin America, in Africa, in the Middle East, and in South and Southeast Asia; improving facilities for training linguists, language teachers and scholars in our universities. The overseas programs of the Foundation have helped to develop English language teaching resources in countries in all parts of the world[13]—sometimes successfully reinforcing local efforts as in Indonesia, sometimes with considerably less successful efforts at piecemeal intervention. Increasingly we have been forced to recognize the English-language interests of these countries as a part of a larger and deeper language problem—and to try to deal with the total language situation in which English must serve as the means to higher education and socio-political modernization (and even, I would add, to the development of a language for a modern national literature, as in India). We are currently planning a very ambitious sociolinguistic survey of Eastern Africa designed to inventory the facts about languages in being and their use, and to help countries in that area identify and define, or implement strategies that would within their means serve the educational needs and aspirations of their many separate African and Asian communities while at the same time satisfying their own conflicting needs for national identity and modernization. This is a formidable task that will require the skills of linguists, social scientists, educators, teachers. Perhaps in the process we will at least start to find a solution to the personal dilemma of the official from the Kenya Ministry of Education mentioned above. It is significant that the people who are so far most deeply concerned and

involved with this project happen to be individuals who chartered new paths in teaching English overseas (the Philippines); in developing new techniques and materials for teaching critical unfamiliar languages (Bengali and Arabic); in bringing sociolinguistics as a sub-discipline into the line of vision and concern of both social scientists and linguists; and who played major roles in mounting the Washington Urban Language Study and gaining support for it.

Certain of our leading linguists have had a scholarly concern for describing the many types of non-standard English (i.e., social dialects) in the U.S. since work on the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada was started thirty-three years ago. However, it was exposure to foreign language and to problems of English as a second language that made these linguists realize that not only do they have as much of a responsibility to describe these non-standard forms of English as they have assumed in the contrastive study of foreign languages, but they also must accept a responsibility to help educators to devise the strategies, the techniques, and the materials to educate teacher-trainers to deal with this problem in the classroom. This interest of the linguist in working with the teacher, the sociologist, the psychologist, on factors which affect language choice and language use happens to coincide with the recent sudden awakening on the part of responsible officials in our cities, in our Federal government, and in our school systems to the fact that the disorientation and alienation of the culturally deprived in our urban communities was a matter of grave national importance, and that while language was not the only key to finding solutions it was an important key, and possibly one of the most readily accessible. And that without cutting and taking a firm hold of this key we could not effectively overcome what may prove to be one of the trickiest English teaching problems that our urban school systems may ever have to confront.

The Foundation's Education Program came to this problem through concern for our vast mass of newly urbanized minorities who were forming ghettos in most of our large cities. Its concern for the problems of this important sector of our communities antidated by some years that of the U.S. government. The Foundation supported diverse efforts by improved instruction in urban schools and in areas having large numbers of children from deprived backgrounds. Prior to the initiation of Head Start, the Foundation founded pilot pre-school programs where language development and the teaching of language skills to young children were stressed. In general, however, these programs were not based on descriptive studies of urban language, or on child language research—those have come only within the last few years. Therefore these initial efforts have been of limited effectiveness. However, they *did* serve to make teachers more cognizant of the process of language acquisition and of the role of language in learning. In the early grades, projects have ranged from highly organized sequences in the language arts curricula, employing new technology and new instructional techniques—to individualized instruction, non-graded classes and the encouragement of independent reading. In almost every case these attempts to "intervene" have necessitated the retraining of teachers, even recent graduates, who come to the classroom without much understanding of child development, cultural differences, or socialization processes, and without knowledge of methods appropriate to the culturally different child.

An effort was made by the Foundation to interest institutions of higher education in the problem. Individual school-based projects have made use of university faculty to provide an orientation to the special problems of the disadvantaged pupil population and to train teachers in appropriate techniques of instruction. In Atlanta, a project provides one day a week of training teachers in language development and the teaching of communication skills. In Pittsburgh a Director of Communication Skills supervises the training of teachers and the introduction of new classroom techniques. In Alaska, a teacher training project has included course work in cultural anthropology and the teaching of English as a second language, and there is a writing committee attached to the project composed of reading specialists, anthropologists, linguists, experienced "bush" teachers, illustrators and writers, who will prepare a new program for grades 1 - 3 for two Eskimo communities. In New Mexico there are two significant developments: one, teaching Spanish to native speakers of Spanish to increase oral command of the language as well as to enable them to become literate in Spanish; and two, the application in selected school systems of a linguistically based reading series known as the Miami Linguistic Readers, originally prepared in Miami by Pauline Rojas, Ralph Robinett and Paul Bell. On the west coast, the Fund for the Advancement of Education is supporting a pilot study conducted by System Development Corporation aimed at improving the instructional program in first grade classrooms attended by Mexican-American children.

In most of these projects there are special programs in remedial reading conducted in junior and senior high schools, and it is necessary to train English teachers in these remedial reading techniques—something their training had not prepared them to do. It is of course clear to anyone who has taken the trouble to look at the reading problem as it affects older children that many factors are responsible for this failure to learn in the early grades, but it is also equally clear that young children who come to school speaking a different first language than standard English must have a special introduction to language and reading —and in fact a different initiation to the school culture—than the traditional approaches commonly found in the schools at present. It is expected that basic research such as is being conducted by the Urban Language Study Program and by the other studies mentioned at the outset of this paper, will for the first time provide the empirical data needed to illuminate the character of the problem and to give us the knowledge of how to design more powerful forms of instruction and more effective means of intervention to deal with it.

I have not detailed those elements that can demonstrate to you why the English language spoken and the English language heard by our vast mass of culturally deprived can legitimately be called a creolized form of English. Professors Nelson Francis and Beryl Bailey and their professional colleagues in Washington and other cities are doing that. But the teachers in those schools where students of this type are predominant, or in those middle- and upper-class schools that are now playing hosts to groups of Negro children for the first time, are beginning to know that they have more than careless language habits to deal with, and that the problem cannot be corrected by ordinary remedial techniques. And we know we have a deeper national problem when the following can take place. The Experiment in International Living in Putney, Vermont

provides orientation for some 200 African students who are brought to the U.S. by American universities and colleges. The Experiment has unique capacity and experience for orientation of this type, and did not have to be instructed by the host institutions in the type of program that would best prepare the African students to work and live effectively on their campuses—until several Negro colleges joined the group. Their representatives urged that the African students be given a special course in Southern English or they otherwise would not be able to communicate with their classmates or their teachers, or become effectively integrated into campus life. Another illustration comes from a TV discussion of creolized American English I heard involving Wm. Stewart of the Center for Applied Linguistics, Professor Charles Hurst from Howard University, and a Negro psychologist from Chicago. The latter had returned to Chicago recently from several years of government service overseas as a cultural affairs officer or information officer, and their 14 or 15-year old daughter was enrolled in a predominantly Negro school. She found herself faced particularly on the social, inter-personal level, with a language barrier as severe and impenetrable as she first faced in the foreign country from which she had returned. The psychologist reported that he and his wife had to set about teaching their daughter the appropriate verb and pronoun forms, the double negatives, the different spellings, the new structure and intonations that would enable her to join the ranks and communicate.

The problem posed by creolized American English is real. However, there is growing awareness that this is so and a beginning is being made in diagnosing the nature of the problem; also in exploring prescriptions. But the solutions will be neither easy, nor quick, nor comprehensive since it is now quite clear that the problem is as awkward as that of the schoolboy who translated "voila un anglais avec son sangfroid habituel" as "here comes an Englishman with his usual bloody cold." The disease could be as persistent, as destructive, as resistant to medication as that traditional British phenomenon. If there are solutions they will be found, as with the common cold, in greater empirical research and in the translation of the research—through appropriate specialists placed at strategic points in each school system who can translate the research findings into classroom programs and materials. Most important, solutions will require the training of new practitioners—and retraining of old ones—who can recognize the disease and who know how to administer the corrective curricula.

The Foundation's interest in this problem relates both to the pupil—the language tools the child should have to achieve his goals; and to the teacher—the knowledge that the teacher must have about language in general, and about the pupil's language problems in particular, to enable her to achieve the community's goals for personal identity and educational achievement. Thus, Foundation purposes in relations to the classroom in Harlem, or in San Antonio, or in Hawaii, are similar to the purposes of the classroom in Kano, in Kingston, in Istanbul, in Lima, i.e., to help establish empirical evidence that will enable those responsible for these classrooms to be properly trained to serve the needs of their students at all education levels equally well.

NOTES

1. Under the Center for Applied Linguistics, this project is analyzing and describing the dialect of the children of a Negro community; and preparing materials for teaching standard English to speakers of that dialect.

2. Under the Columbia University's Department of Linguistics, and assisted by Paul Cohen and Clarence Robins, William Labov is attempting to describe the full range of the characteristic linguistic behaviour of young Negro and Puerto Rican New Yorkers, to determine the age levels at which non-standard speakers begin to develop variant forms of language behaviour and language values, and to define the structural and functional conflicts btween the dialects studied and standard English.

3. This project is describing the dialect used by children in kindergarten through third grade in the Keaaukaha school in Hilo, Hawaii, where the native language of 95% of the students is Pidgin; and developing procedures and materials that are effective in teaching monolingual Pidgin speakers an acceptable variety of English.

4. The goal of this project, being carried out at Michigan University's Center for Research in Language and Language Behaviour, is to produce preliminary evidence of the feasibility of using second language techniques to teach standard English to students at Negro colleges in the South.

5. Under W. Nelson Francis of Brown University, this project has analyzed the language used by pre-Freshmen about to enter Tougaloo College in Mississippi (carried out by Dr. Beryl Bailey of Yeshiva University); conducted an "attitude survey" (by Professor Richard Tucker of McGill) to assess the attitude of Tougaloo students toward various varieties of standard English; and prepared teaching materials for classroom and laboratory use.

6. The goals of this project are to provide detailed evidence about social differences in the oral communication of middle and lower class white and Negro residents of Chicago.

7. Under Michigan State University auspices, this project is attempting to identify significant features of pronunciation, lexicon, grammar, and syntax of native Detroiters of various social classes and ages and to compare these with comparable features of the speech of groups of lower class Negroes, Jews, Southern whites, Poles, Canadians, and Mexicans.

8. Professor Hurst at Howard University assesses the variable feelings and attitudes of 1,209 Howard freshmen from 42 states toward what he calls dialectolalia, i.e. the series of oral language behaviours which differentiate sub-standard (low proficiency) speakers from high proficiency speakers.

9. A study by the English Department of LeMoyne College to describe the speech of Negro matriculants from Memphis high schools and design correctives.

10. The Ford Foundation 21 offices, and actually supports developmental activities in ten countries in South and Southeast Asia, thirty in Africa and the Middle East, and fifteen in Latin America (including the Caribbean).

11. In many countries such as Israel and South America, English is indispensable for the reading in many university disciplines.

12. This conference was a first attempt to encourage leading social scientists and linguists to take a joint look at language as a factor in development. It was carried out under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council on November 1-3, 1966.

13. The Foundation has worked in English as a second language in India, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey.

14. In at least sixteen cities.

RECENT CHANGES IN AMERICAN ENGLISH

By Albert H. Marckwardt

It must be understood at the outset that any attempt to draw a series of valid conclusions about the present state of English in this country is a vast undertaking. One of the requirements for it is unquestionably a generous supply of courage, if not rashness. The reasons for this are not difficult to comprehend. There are approximately 190,000,000 speakers of the American variety of English distributed over an area of three million square miles. The linguistic output of a group this large, even in the course of a single day, is so enormous as to stagger the imagination. Consequently, even a reliable sampling of the language must necessarily be gargantuan in size. *A Standard Sample of Present-Day Edited American English*, compiled by W. Nelson Francis of Brown University, consists of 1,014,294 running words and as the title indicates, it is limited to just a single functional variety of the language, edited prose.

Although it has been available for analysis only a short time, this sample has begun to yield some interesting results; yet in the absence of a whole battery of studies, anyone who pretends to discuss the subject of American English today must necessarily depend upon personal impressions and much more limited sources of information. One can only hope that these limitations will not result in distortion or an unrealistic presentation of the language as it is used today.

In this connection another caveat must be entered as well, with respect to the term *recent*. Except in the very obvious features of vocabulary borrowing and word formation, language seldom changes to a degree that is perceptible in the short space of a decade or two. Most of us live too long for rapid linguistic change to occur—and I hasten to say that I am heartily in favor of this. At any rate, we continue through the course of our post-adolescent years to use our native language with very little change, if any. Late in our lives we may be thought of as somewhat old-fashioned in our language habits, but even so we still constitute part of the totality of the speech community. Other things being equal—a dangerous statement to make with reference to anything as complex and intimate as language—the current lengthening of the life span may well retard processes of linguistic change. It would seem reasonable, however, to deal in this paper with the development of the English language in America throughout the course of the twentieth century, taking 1900 as our point of departure and considering the present as the *terminus ad quem*.

Before turning to the language itself it will be helpful to glance briefly at the turn of the century in terms of the state of literature and formal speech at that time, because these do constitute layers of linguistic activity. In addition we must consider the educational scene; this too has a pronounced impact on language.

As far as language on the public platform is concerned, William Jennings Bryan had just made a reputation for himself with his "Cross of Gold" oration favoring free silver, at the National Democratic Convention of 1896. The

travelling Chatauqua was bringing inspirational lectures to towns all over the land. Russell Conwell had just about finished the six thousandth delivery of his *Acres of Diamonds* speech. Some thirteen million men and women had listened to his magnetically resonant voice and had been inspired by his collection of success stories. Judged by contemporary standards the language of pulpit and platform at that time was flamboyant as to diction, involved as to style and syntax, lofty in tone. It was language attuned to a special situation and purpose.

On the stage, our drama was still at the level of Clyde Fitch's *The Women in the Case* and David Belasco's *Girl of the Golden West*. The titles themselves convey a hint of the linguistic sophistication of the product. We were still two decades away from the realistic handling of theme, plot, and dialogue that was to emerge in Eugene O'Neill's *Anna Christie* and *The Hairy Ape* and ultimately to have a profound influence upon a host of playwrights.

In poetry we had lost the one authentic voice of the late nineteenth century; Walt Whitman had died in 1892. Here, too, we were in a state of suspension, awaiting the burst of creative activity which the magazine *Poetry* was to stimulate almost immediately from the time of its establishment in 1912. Within the next five years Robert Frost, Vachel Lindsay, Edgar Lee Masters, Carl Sandburg and Amy Lowell were all to make their initial appearances, all of them with totally different attitudes toward language and its use from that which characterized the polite versifiers of the post-Civil War era.

The novel was in a somewhat different situation. Here we had attained a maturity considerably beyond that evident in the other genres. In *Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain had already demonstrated his ability to handle the vernacular honestly and artistically. Henry James, too, was working out his own quite different solution of what was basically the same problem and in three great works of the first decade of the new century was to demonstrate the culmination of his powers.

Let me hasten to say that it is by no means my intention to burden this discussion of the language with a thumbnail sketch of American literature. As a linguist I am scarcely inclined to overrate the importance of the literary language in comparison with other forms of Standard English, but I readily concede the necessity of recognizing the reciprocal relations between them. It is on these grounds that I consider the literary scene at the turn of the century to be germane to our purpose.

In much the same manner the educational situation at 1900 has a definite bearing upon the subject under discussion. Today we are accustomed to thinking of almost the entire youth population as being involved in secondary education and of steadily increasing numbers attending our colleges and universities. The title, *A Fourth of a Nation*, that Paul Woodring gave his book on the schools a decade ago may soon prove to be an understatement. This is in marked contrast to 1900 when only one child in ten was in high school and only one in twenty-five went on to college.

Although there were exceptions the majority of these children came from homes where the standard language was spoken, where there was some acquain-

tance with books, where the sight of a person reading was not a strange phenomenon. Consequently, at this time the concern with correctness, with the establishment of the so-called decencies of language was not a primary concern of the secondary schools. The high-school composition textbooks were rhetorics, not manuals of correct usage. Linguists occasionally tend to forget this when they engage in diatribes against the school adherence to eighteenth-century attitudes toward language. They did exist, but more particularly at the elementary-school level and in books on the English language written for popular consumption.

At any rate, all of the matters which have been mentioned in this rapid review had their bearing upon what we might call the *fin de siècle* linguistic scene. We must now try to determine what has happened to the English language in America over the past sixty-five years. This can best be done by proceeding systematically, dealing first with the sounds of the language, going on to matters of inflection and word formation, and concluding with syntax, the lexicon, and matters of style.

As far as the sound system is concerned, far-reaching changes in the phonological structure of English could scarcely be expected to develop within a period as brief as sixty-five years. They usually take centuries to establish themselves. To take just one case in point, there is some evidence for the existence of the identity of the stressed vowels in words like *herd, burn, stir* and *word* as early as 1550, especially in the diary of Henry Machyn and the *Churchwarden's Records*. Shakespeare was apparently something of a conservative with respect to this feature of pronunciation, but there is clear evidence which indicates that he had been affected to a certain degree. Nevertheless, it is not until the age of Pope that we find poets rhyming such words as *learn* and *turn* with impunity. This means that at least two centuries elapsed between the first indications of sound change and its firm establishment. In the light of this we can scarcely expect to find much in the way of change between 1900 and the present day.

The developments which are noticeable seem to center about the relative standing of certain regional types of pronunciation and observable tendencies toward the disappearance of some regional forms. In 1900 there was throughout almost the entire country a willingness to assign considerable prestige to the pronunciation of the northern sector of the Atlantic seaboard, particularly the area in and around Boston. One indication of this is to be found in a statement by Richard Grant White, whose *Words and Their Uses* was still a highly popular book at the turn of the century: "The full, free, unconscious utterance of the broad *ah* sound of *a* is the surest indication in speech of social culture which began at the cradle." In 1909 Thomas R. Lounsbury of Yale, a careful observer of the language noted that, "The sound of [a] shows every sign of slow but steady disappearance," and C. H. Grandgent felt that the decline had begun not long after 1850. These comments may be correct, but it is possible that the apparent disappearance of the sound may be a matter of population shift rather than a sound change, as the term is generally understood.

In much the same manner the pronunciation of post-vocalic *r* has also weathered the storm of violent disapproval which it once occasioned. When Henry James returned to this country after an absence of some years, he was

disturbed by this clear sounding of *r* to the extent that he described it as, "a morose grinding of the back teeth." However questionable his phonetic accuracy may have been, his attitude was clear enough. He placed the blame for this upon, "the American school, the American newspaper, the American Dutchman and Dago," demonstrating a logic about as questionable as his phonetics. Recent investigations which have been carried out in New York City by William Labov show that the constricted pronunciation is gaining ground, especially among the upper middle class. It is used by this group in more formal contexts, even though the non-retroflex pronunciation may occur in informal situations. The younger members of all social groups agree in recognizing its prestige status.

How are these changes of use and attitude to be accounted for? Radio, television, and perhaps the films have combined to make every person aware of the existence of types of regional speech other than that which he himself employs. There can be no better illustration of this than the speech of the current occupant of the President's chair and that of his two predecessors. President Eisenhower employed a type of speech characteristic of the mid-section of the country. President Kennedy's was thoroughly typical of the Boston area, and President Johnson's illustrates one of the three varieties of Texas speech.

Awareness seems to have brought with it, happily, a greater tolerance of speech difference. Given this situation, it is likely that sheer weight of numbers will favor the increased adoption of non-southern, non-seaboard forms. Here the practice of many radio stations is a case in point. Small local stations often employ announcers and newscasters who speak with a local or regional accent. Those with a wide area coverage are much more likely to use announcers with a type of speech not especially associated with a particular region or locality.

A few minor points may be mentioned but they scarcely merit detailed treatment here. In some words of foreign origin, stress continues to move toward the front: witness the variant pronunciation of *inquiry, robust,* and *cigarette.* This tendency, with roots reaching back some five or six centuries, will undoubtedly continue. We have always been somewhat more cautious than the British about anglicizing foreign loan words, and it is difficult to see anything in the immediate future which will reduce this caution.

We come next to a consideration of inflectional forms. Since the English language has only two major inflections left, noun plurals and the regular or so-called weak verb past tenses and past participles, the outlook and our immediate past history is relatively clear. The major patterns have been and continue to be extended to a few hitherto irregular forms which perhaps because of frequent use resisted conformity over a longer period than most nouns and verbs. The fact that a change is in process can usually be detected by the presence of alternate forms, not infrequently resulting in confusion on the part of the speaker as to which he should use. Examples among the nouns are *scarves, scarfs; antennae, antennas.* Verb forms show alternation between *woken and waked, strove and strived.* In cases of this kind one may be reasonably certain that in the course of time the irregular form will be used less frequently and eventually disappear altogether.

With borrowed nouns, particularly though not exclusively those having come into the language from Latin, there has been a conflict between the plural form in the source language and the regular English pattern. *Antenna* has already been mentioned as a case in point. As long as it was chiefly a zoological term the Latin plural was maintained. As soon as it became part of the vocabulary of radio communications, the native plural pattern asserted itself. We have unquestionably made such a mess of *gladiolus* that thousands of speakers of English take refuge in the clipped form *glads*. I cannot yet bring myself to add an English plural suffix to *dachshund*.

It is in another aspect of form, however, that some of the most active changes in the language are taking place, namely compounding and word derivation. By compounding I mean the combination of full words, free forms, with each other. Word derivation refers to the addition of prefixes and suffixes to free forms. It should be said that the English language has a particular genius for compounding, even though it is not as noticeable with us as in German, where all compounds are written solid. Clearly when one encounters *Landeshauptmannstellvertreter* in print the combinative status of the word is immediately brought home. Yet it is not unusual to encounter the term *lieutenant governor*, the precise equivalent of the German word, without being aware that it is a compound. At all events, every new invention, every new development results in the wholesale creation of combined forms in English, to the considerable enrichment of the lexicon. The Americans have been particularly active in this field.

An excellent index of the extent to which these processes operate is furnished by the recently published *Addenda Section* of *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* which represents the accretions to the vocabular between 1961 and 1966. On the very first page of the eight which comprise this gathering I find *aerospace, aftertax* (adjective), *asphalt jungle, banquet lamp, beta decay, binary notation, black muslim, bottom out* (verb), and *breadboard* (verb). *Tow-away zone*, of some current significance to New Yorkers, appears later on in the text. This is just a partial listing covering a period of five years. From it, however, one can easily form some notion of what the total for a sixty-five year period would amount to.

There is almost equal vigor in what I have called the process of word derivation—the addition of prefixes and suffixes. Again, the first page of the Webster's addenda lists 19 combinations with *anti-*, the prefix about which, as Allen Walker Read once said, a history of opposition movements in the United States might be written. It is scarcely necessary to list them all here; *anti-missile, antinovel, antiparticle, antipoverty,* and *antistatic* are among them.

One amusing aspect of the operation of these processes is the extent to which formations to describe the same object may differ on the two sides of the Atlantic, as well as the reaction of the British to American terms and vice versa. This is aptly illustrated by an article which appeared in the December 30, 1966 issue of the London *Times*. It began, "We hear that the little do-it-yourself breathalyser kits have sold out at unexpected speed. Fifteen hundred were imported from California, where they are made—and horribly called "drinkometers." One can only murmur, "De gustibus —."

Space forbids an account of such other language processes as functional change (the conversion of words from one part-of-speech function to another), clipping, and back formation, all of which have been liberally employed throughout the past sixty-five years. I shall mention only a few recent instances of the last of these. *To babysit* is a recent back formation from *baby sitter*, and in my own locality *house sitter*, i.e. to occupy a house during a brief absence of the owner, and the consequent *to house sit* constitute an extension of the same pattern. Similarly in collegiate institutions with a teacher preparation program, the combination *student teacher* has given rise to the verbal compound *to student teach*. Examples could be multiplied with little effort.

Of the changes in grammatical function that have occurred, one that has vastly annoyed the purist is the use of *like* as a subordinating conjunction. True enough, it occurs more frequently in spoken English than in the written language, but its use is steadily increasing. Why it developed is reasonably clear. A speaker begins to say something on the order of, "Jim looks like his father," but in the split-second that elapses between the utterance of *like* and the end of the sentence, he changes his mind, deciding to qualify the idea, and comes out with, "Jim looks like his father used to look." Some thirty years ago I prophesied the eventual takeover of this construction, and I have encountered nothing in the last five to cause me to change my mind.

Much the same conclusion might apply to the use of *real* as an intensive adverb used in place of *very*, and indeed repeating the very same semantic and grammatical processes by means of which *very* replaced *swithe* in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. I happen not to use either *like* as a conjunction or *real* as an intensive myself, but I find nothing surprising in these two developments.

The present century has unquestionably witnessed an increase in the incidence of the split infinitive construction, and there seems every reason to expect this to continue especially in situations where ambiguity or awkwardness result from maintaining the conventional order. Within the past few days a presidential statement suggests that Mr. Johnson was confronted with a problem of this nature. He was building on a base form, "help to shrink the areas of potential conflict." He wanted to use an adverbial modifier with *to shrink*. Had he placed it before *to*, it would have been ambiguous, capable of modifying either *help* or *shrink*. An adverb of some length, *considerably* for example, inserted between *shrink* and *the areas* would have been awkwardly placed between very and object. Since the noun object was here modified by an adjective phrase, placement between the noun and its modifying phrase would have been impossible, and to have put it at the end would have placed it so far from the verb that it would have lost all force. The more the language increases in complexity of phrase structure, the more speakers and writers will be forced into splitting the infinitive, and it is generally under circumstances such as these that the construction occurs.

Aside from this, there seems to be relatively little to comment on with respect to syntax. Word order has remained remarkably stable, and there is little here that differentiates American from other varieties of English. As the patterns of informal English introduce heavily into the formal language, it is

possible that even some of the choices we have now, with respect to the placement of adverbs and adverbial phrases for example, will become more restricted.

The English vocabulary has experienced a phenomenal growth, especially during the past two centuries, and this is bound to continue. That much of this arises from the manipulation of elements already in the language has been demonstrated, but we also continue to be avid borrowers from other tongues. In this connection the Webster's Addenda yields such terms as *autostrada, beckuana, bantustan, bossa nova, bizen ware, ombudsman,* no two from the same language, to say nothing of the overwhelming number of scientific terms with Latin and Greek bases. This will continue, as it has ever since 1900. We should be thankful that at best some words fall into disuse over the centuries; otherwise the lexical burden on the language would be intolerable.

I should like now to return to a point that was suggested at the beginning of this paper in connection with the sketch of the literary scene at the turn of the century. There we found that poetry and the drama, and public speaking as well were in the throes of a somewhat artificial style, though the novel had begun to move forward to a more realstic portrayal of the language as it is spoken. With respect to the novel this development has been summarized rather well in a recent book by Richard Bridgman, *The Colloquial Style in America.* Bridgman selects for particular treatment Mark Twain, Henry James, Gertrude Stein, and Ernest Hemingway. To illustrate what he means by rendering the vernacular in prose, Bridgman cites the following two sentences written by Hawthorne and Hemingway respectively:

> Beyond that darksome verge, the firelight glimmered on the stately trunks and almost black foliage of pines, intermixed with the lighter verdure of sapling oaks, maples, and poplars, while here and there lay the gigantic corpses of dead trees, decaying on the leaf-strewn soil.
>
> We walked on the road between the thick trunks of the old beeches and the sunlight came through the leaves in light patches on the grass.

At first glance the four authors Bridgman has chosen for extended treatment may seem a somewhat strangely assorted quartet, but Bridgman points out in their work the common elements of fragmentation, stress, and repetition, all focused upon single words or phrases. He draws upon the authority of Harold Whitehall, Malcolm Cowley, and Northrop Frye to substantiate his point that there is a style of verbal communication especially characteristic of North America which emphasizes these smaller units at the expense of the larger verbal structure.

I am inclined to feel that Bridgman's analysis, provocative as it may seem, is only partial and that it needs to be refined by somewhat more sophisticated methods of analysis. He might have employed with some profit the approach used by Martin Joos in *The Five Clocks,* which took into account the size of the group communicating, the amount of give-and-take between speaker and hearer or hearers, and the tendency toward shifts in level of formality after a certain degree of sympathy has been reached. Joos is also more precise in

describing the particular linguistic features which characterize each of what he considers to be the five styles of the language: intimate, casual, consultative, formal, and frozen.

Nevertheless, there can be no quarrel with Bridgman's thesis, and indeed it may be extended beyond the limits of his treatment. Both literary English and formal spoken address have, particularly since 1900, been subject to a pervasive influence from less formal varieties of the language. This is by no means an isolated phenomenon, but is connected with a number of other factors. The development of electronic voice amplification has rendered virtually obsolete the type of platform pronunciation recorded in the second edition (1934) of Webster's *New International Dictionary*. The substitution of such devices of informal discussion as the panel for the older rigid framework of formal debate have left their mark upon the general style of public address. There is a trend toward the casual or at least a movement away from rigid formality in many types of public behavior ranging from dress to table manners and including modes of greeting, introduction, and leave-taking.

Adlai Stevenson would not have captivated the national Democratic convention of 1896 as he did that of 1952. Conversely, when in a political gathering today a keynote speaker attempts to follow the style of William Jennings Bryan, as Governor Clement of Tennessee did only a few years ago, he reaps a harvest of apathy and inattention as a reward for his efforts.

Certainly there is nothing here which need serve as a cause for alarm. I see in these tendencies no evidence of a slackening of standards, no loss of clarity, no weakening of moral fibre, but rather the development of the language as a more sensitive instrument, less labored, less remote, more responsive to the spirit of the age.

AUTHORS ON THE CAMPUS

By JERRE MANGIONE

I wonder how many of you share with me the impression that our national folklore encourages the general public to associate the word "peculiar" with the word "author." I also have the impression that a living author is generally considered far more peculiar than any dead author.

What is so peculiar about an author? One charge that can certainly be levelled against him is that he is a creature of contradiction. For example, a writer usually dislikes to speak in public, yet once he gets started it is difficult to stop him. Most writers crave privacy (they are more apt to envy J. D. Salinger than Truman Capote in this respect), privacy enough to ponder over their most intimate thoughts. Yet they are perfectly willing to share those intimate thoughts with thousands of readers—million if their publishers can find them. Most writers dread public appearances yet never before in the annals of American culture have so many writers appeared on so many public platforms—an ever increasing number, by the way, in colleges, universities, and high schools.

Perhaps one reason a writer may feel compelled to perform is because he has accepted the layman's concept of himself: that he is an oddball who rates the same degree of curiosity as a two-headed monkey or a double-jointed bearded lady. Another reason is that, after having delivered himself of a book that has recently come into print, he is deathly afraid that no one, outside his circle of close friends and immediate family, will pay any attention to his book. When you consider the weird habit of publishers to do nothing about advertising a trade book unless it has become a success, you will agree that there is some justification for his fear. To offset his premonitions, he is willing to make any sacrifice—speak in public, attend autographing parties and be interviewed at ungodly hours of the night on radio and television, sometimes by some discjockey who pronounces the names of horses more easily than he does the names of authors. In his craven bid for attention, the writer is encouraged, yea even commanded, by his even more craven publisher who persuades him that unless he is willing to expose himself to the public his newly born creation will suffer a rapid demise and all too quickly land in those obituary columns circulated by the Marboro Book Company.

It is easy to caricature the living writer and the mixed feelings he has toward his art because in this modern atmosphere of the absurd, his absurdities sometimes loom even more largely than his talent. Take, for example, the melancholy case of "Abner Noodle."*

"He became a writer
in the first place
because he had trouble
opening his mouth
in front of people;

but after one bestseller
requests for speaking engagements
began rolling in, and now
he speaks so often that he
no longer has
time or energy to write
anything more than
telegraphic notes
accepting
new speaking engagements."

Or the more melancholy case of "Orpheus Ruffle."*

"Beautiful and willing
women are the proper
dividends of fame,
this novelist
maintained, and
as his fame was
great and his royalties
few, he collected all
the dividends he
could lay his hands on
until, from utter
exhaustion, he collapsed
on the torso of a
most opulent dividend
and went to
his final reward."

Perhaps the most melancholy case of all is that of "Oliver Arb."*

"When Oliver Arb's first
and last novel, a prose
poem influenced by Thoreau
got no reviews and only
twenty sales (fifteen by
blood relatives) he bought
the metal bookplates from
his publisher, and strap-
ping them around his middle,
jumped straight into
Walden Pond."

*Quoted with the author's permission from *Life Sentences for Everybody* by Jerre Mangione, Ableard-Schuman Ltd., 1966.

Probably the most peculiar thing about a writer is his attitude toward the act of writing. He is desperately anxious to write yet often he doesn't want to write. He is usually testimony to my theory that in the effort to avoid writing a writer can do anything—he can even become President of the United States. If you think I am joking, consider the case of one of my favorite Presidents, the late John F. Kennedy who, after having published two books, could not face the effort of writing another and was impelled instead to pour his energies into running for president. It is seldom laziness that makes writers such powerful procrastinators; it is simply the terror of facing a blank page, a terror stimulated by the fear that what gets written on that blank page won't be any good.

Several instances of overt procrastination come to mind. One concerns a famous woman novelist who was invited by the writer Josephine Herbst to stay with her at her Bucks County farmhouse, where nothing would distract her from completing a manuscript that was long overdue. The novelist gratefully accepted the invitation. At the hour set for her arrival, her hostess found that her car refused to start; so she asked a neighboring farmer to meet the train with his car. The farmer lived several miles up the road, and when Josephine did not see him appear she assumed that the novelist had changed her plans and remained in New York. Several days later, when she happened to be passing by the farmer's house, she decided to drop in for a chat. As she entered the door, she was greeted by the spectacle of her novelist friend on her hands and knees, strenuously scrubbing the floor. After Josephine had screamed in horror and surprise, the novelist explained she had arrived when she was expected but when she learned from the farmer that he had five children and an ailing wife, she decided she would rather look after the children and scrub the floors than work on her manuscript.

One should not examine the alleged peculiarities of writers without considering some of their basic motives for becoming writers. There is no single explanation, of course. Invariably, there are a series of them, as complex as the experiences of childhood. Often, writers are persons whose individuality was threatened when they were young. In an essay entitled "Why I Write" George Orwell wrote: "From a very early age, perhaps the age of five or six, I knew that when I grew up I should be a writer. . . . I was a middle child of three, but there was a gap of five years on either side, and I barely saw my father before I was eight. For this and other reasons I was somewhat lonely, and I soon developed disagreeable mannerisms, which made me unpopular throughout my school days. I had the lonely child's habit of making up stories and holding conversations with imaginary persons, and I think from the very start my literary ambitions were mixed up with the feeling of being isolated and undervalued."

A miserable childhood seems to be a common occurrence in the lives of writers. Either they were ugly ducklings (or imagined they were) or they were pushed around by larger brothers and sisters or by tyrannical parents. Or they were inordinately shy and fearful of oral communication. Whatever their deficiency, the world of the imagination presented an opportunity to ease the trauma of their daily encounters with reality. The stutterer, the groper, the ninety-pound weakling or the two-hundred pound butterball could, if their

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sensibilities and feeling for language were keen enough and their determination strong enough, emerge as magnetic and eloquent personalities able to command the devotion of thousands of readers, some of them English teachers. By some alchemy of compensation the deficiencies were transformed into the miracle of art.

In the course of such achievement, the personality peculiarities of a writer often dissolve or are repressed. Some writers, of course, refuse to part with them and insist on displaying them at every possible opportunity. If the quality of their work is good enough, few people mind, least of all a general reading public that has long been conditioned to believe that all artists are peculiar to some degree. It is doubtful that any writer has ever lost many readers for personal behavior that might be considered eccentric or wicked.

Yet the academic world has not always been as forebearing in its attitude toward living writers. Those of you who attended schools in the twenties may recall the standard attitude of English departments that the only good authors were dead authors.

For their personalities as well as for their writings, living authors were regarded with deep suspicion and superficial respect, more or less as upstarts unworthy of the dignity of the classroom, and certainly never to be mentioned in the same breath with the dead authors whose names, like those in any graveyard memorial, kept reappearing on the syllabi year after year. Although I attended an excellent high school, I do not recall ever being assigned, either for classroom use or for suplementary reading, a single book for any living author of that time. This boycott was almost as rigidly enforced at the university I attended. A few brash instructors (never a teacher of professorial rank) dared mention the writings of such living authors as Dreiser, Anderson, Sandburg, Fitzgerald and Hemingway. One of them, may his departed soul be having a heavenly time, went so far as to assign us for classroom discussion Joseph Wood Krutch's *Modern Temper*. But on the whole, living writers were considered part of the entertainment world, along with actors, baseball players, and marathon dancers. A writer might be asked to give a talk or a poetry reading, but that was as far as our academic guardians of literature would let him go. The heavy hand of caution reigned supreme, and so did the dead authors.

Like all authors, the authors of those times were keenly responsive to hostile forces. They became even more contemptuous of the academic world than the academic world was of them. From their point of view, colleges and universities were stuffy bastions of conservatism, as removed from the mainstream of living and as inimical to the creative urge as any graveyard. Some of this attitude was promulgated by the difficulties the fledgling writers experienced when they tried to fit into the mould of a college curriculum, some by the honest belief that if a man wanted to be a writer he should be home writing, not in the classroom listening.

Ironically, many of the major American writers of this century, whose writings are now used extensively in our high schools and colleges, never completed their college education and, in some instances, never made any attempt

to attend college. Ernest Hemingway belongs to the latter category; so does Sherwood Anderson, whose formal schooling stopped at the age of fourteen. Eugene O'Neill was suspended from Princeton in 1906 for general hell-raising. Dreiser tried to attend Indiana University, but soon left because of financial difficulties. Robert Frost tried to be a student first at Dartmouth, then at Harvard, but dropped out to take up farming. F. Scott Fitzgerald left Princeton because of academic difficulties. William Faulkner did not care for formal education. He was a high school dropout; later, because of his status as a World War veteran, he was admitted to the University of Mississippi as a special student, but left after a little more than a year.

John Steinbeck, this country's most recent Nobel Prize winner, went to Stanford University for a while to specialize in marine biology but soon gave that up and headed East in a freight boat. Incidentally, Steinbeck was the author who was listed as the top favorite of incoming students at Columbia College last year. The previous number one favorite was said to have been fairly well educated. His name was William Shakespeare.

Of course, it must be remembered that a far smaller percentage of the population attended college in the twenties and thirties than does now. The young would-be author was often more bent on accumulating experiences to write about than he was on accumulating credits toward a diploma. A stint as a merchant sailor or as a reporter was considered far more valuable training for the young writer than any college curriculum. That is not surprising when you consider how many of our earlier literary heroes had preferred the education offered by ships and newspapers to that offered by college courses—among them, Jack London, Mark Twain, Joseph Conrad, Walt Whitman, Herman Melville, William Dean Howells, Stephen Crane. None of these writers, with the exception of Stephen Crane, ever set foot in a college classroom. Crane briefly attended two colleges, Lafayette and Syracuse, but showed more interest in playing pool and baseball than he did in his studies.

As we all know, a drastic change of situation began to take place some twenty years ago. Thanks perhaps to the literary explorations of the subconscious by Proust, Joyce and Hafka, external experience was no longer considered essential to the development of the writer. The concept of the college educated writer began to be appearing; the world of academia no longer seemed deadly and inimical to the creative urge. Aspiring young writers began to emulate a new set of literary heroes—James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, E. E. Cummings, Wallace Stevens, Edmund Wilson, John Dos Passos, Sinclair Lewis, all of them college graduates. Nowadays it is rare to find a published author who hasn't at least one college degree. Even a rough and tumble personality like Norman Mailer holds a degree from Harvard.

What is even more remarkable is the frequency with which authors in the flesh rub elbows with dead authors. A large number of novelists and poets are either visiting writers on college campuses or are regular members of college faculties. Saul Bellow, John Barth, Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth, John Hawks, Herbert Gold, Marguerite Young, Mark Harris, Wright Morris, George P. Elliot, R. V. Cassill, Hortense Calisher—these are but some of the leading

novelists of our times who are busily engaged in teaching courses in writing and in literature. A number of them have the master degree, one or two the Ph.D., but their main credentials for teaching students consist of the novels and short stories they have published.

Poets are even more prevalent on college campuses. Indeed, it is becoming a matter of pride among many colleges to have a poet in residence on the English faculty. Never before have students been exposed to so many live poets. In addition to those in residence, there are troupes of them who visit campuses all over the country, reading their work and participating in the classroom, not only as entertainers but also as teachers.

The poet Donald Hall recently reported on this phenomenon in the December 11, 1966 issue of the *New York Times* Book Review: "The American poet who twenty years ago lacked an audience has one today. This audience is not metaphorical; it is row upon row of college students, mixed with a few professors and the old ladies who gather in college towns. The lecture-platform is revolutionizing the life of the American poet, and probably his poetry as well.

"Sometimes the poet reads his own poems, sometimes he lectures, often he visits classes, always he makes contact with the young, formally and informally, from the lectern and over the coffee-cup. Sometimes he visits one campus a day on a circuit that keeps him moving for a week or two. Sometimes he spends two days or a week at a particular institution. Ten years ago lecture agents handled only the most prominent poets; now they take on the younger and less-known, if they are good performers."

Mr. Hall was referring to their public performances, of course. What is happening to the private performances of poets and novelists as a result of being unduly influenced by the campus atmosphere may not always be to the good. There is the danger of spiritual silicosis when writers attach themselves too closely to so circumscribed a world. But whatever the effect on the quality of their writing, there can be no question as to the constructive role that living poets and novelists can play in extending and deepening the student's sensibilities.

One of their more useful services is to narrow the gap between the literature of the past and that of the present. Literature, as represented by its live practitioners, ceases to be an esoteric and abstract phenomenon of the past. The discussion of a novel, a poem, or a story by a writer who knows first-hand the experience of literary creation is apt to become a vivid and memorable occasion. The student may be stimulated to the degree that he may begin to read (and sometimes to write) for the sheer pleasure of it. And he may be able to see the writings of the past in a fresh light, with all their virtues (and their faults) more sharply in evidence. All literature is likely to become a more cogent commentary on life, and the student gains in appreciation and perception.

When I joined the English Department of the University of Pennsylvania about five years ago, I decided I would try to put these beliefs to the test, especially when I discovered how few living writers had ever been brought to

that campus for anything more than a lecture or reading. After listening to me sypmathetically, the chairman of the English Department gave me *carte blanche* but no money. And so it was that our first visiting writer, Kay Boyle, came to the Pennsylvania campus out of the goodness of her heart, as a personal favor, without any compensation. Somehow, Miss Boyle managed to galvanize almost every person who came within the sound of her voice, including several of my staid colleagues who seldom strayed from the confines of their particular salt mine. So clear and emphatic was her impact on students and teachers alike that our English Department chairman was able to obtain some money from the administration for a tentative visiting writers' program.

It soon became a regular part of the English Department's activity. Kay Boyle returned for a second visit, this time for pay. Then followed a long succession of visiting novelists and poets, among them Louise Bogan, William Golding, Richard Eberhart, May Sarton, Jean Garrigue, Philip Roth, Kenneth Burke, Elizabeth Bowen, Hortense Calisher, Denis Donoghue, Archibald MacLeish (who visited us twice, the first time for three days, the second time—thanks to our Provost's affection for the humanities—for a month), Daniel G. Hoffman, William Meredith, Ralph Ellison, and Reed Whittemore.

The visiting writers came at the rate of four or five a year, usually for a week at a time. All students, whether they were English majors or not, were invited to apply for personal conferences with the visiting writer. The only stipulation was that each student submit a manuscript several days before the conference. The best of the manuscripts were turned over to the visiting author who used them as a basis for his discussion with their writers. Incidentally, in the course of following this procedure, we learned what we had long suspected: that there were a number of talented writers majoring in subjects that had no relation to English literature.

The visiting writers also met with our imaginative writing classes for extended group discussions. One of the most effective uses we made of them was to have them address the graduate students engaged in teaching freshmen composition. We were especially anxious that these young teachers, whose scholarly pursuits often landed in the tight embrace of dead writers should be exposed to living novelists and poets who, on the basis of their own experience, could discuss the value of teaching expository writing.

The response of the students to the visiting writers was most gratifying. In a number of instances, they had never heard of the writers we presented but they were nonetheless grateful for their presence on the campus, eager to confer with them, and even willing to read what they had published. But students are never entirely satisfied with what their elders try to do for them (which is salutary for the elders) and before long they were clamoring to have the visiting writers remain on campus for lengthier periods of time. Eventually, they got their way, for it made good sense to the English Department to immerse the visiting writers more deeply in the teaching of our students. With its long procession of novelists and poets the visiting program had paved the way for this next step. After four years even our most conservative faculty members had become accustomed to the idea of having living writers dealing with students; even they had to admit that writers on campus were no more peculiar or disruptive than some of their own colleagues.

Having achieved that much, we decided that we might get more value for our money if we used it to pay for the part-time salaries of writers who would actually teach some courses. Thanks to the support of a sympathetic dean and a liberal minded provost, that is what we were able to accomplish. We now have a poetry writing workshop as a regular part of our curriculum. It was taught for the first time in the spring of 1966 by William Meredith; this year it was taught by Jean Garrigue. Next fall it will be taught by the poet and scholar Daniel G. Hoffman, who is joining our English faculty as a permanent member. In addition to the poetry workshop, we have also had for two semesters a workshop in fiction writing and a course in the literature of the modern novel, both of them taught by the novelist, Philip Roth, who is our current visiting author.

Although the visiting authors program took up a great deal of my time and patience (there were days when I felt more like a booking agent than a teacher) I find myself missing some of the drama that the writers generated simply by being themselves. I recall, for example, that rather early in the program, while it was still in its tentative stage, one of our lady novelists at a gathering of my colleagues began a long and extravagant eulogy about a student with whom she had just had a conference. In a clear, ringing voice, she described the student as something of a literary genius, a paragon of self-discipline with a sure sense of direction, and wound up by saying: "This is a young man who should be running your English Department." What she failed to realize was that the person to whom she was addressing her remarks happened to be the chairman of the English Department and the student she was describing had been a problem to every teacher in the university who had ever had dealings with him, precisely because he lacked both discipline and direction.

Another novelist devoted a good part of an hour exhorting the writing students he was addressing to abandon formal education, declaring that if they sincerely wished to write fine stories and novels they should live their formative years in any other place but a campus. As far as I know, no one in the audience followed the advice.

Actually, nothing truly scandalous took place. No visiting writer became drunk, obscene, or lecherous. One of them, however, did indulge in a bit of hysteria. The scene was a large cocktail party that had been given in her honor at an elegent center city mansion, on her first day in Philadelphia. I am told it was an excellent party but I never had the opportunity to find out for myself. Nor did the guest of honor, for less than a quarter of an hour after I had arrived with her, she took offense at something said to her by one of the guests (probably because she was exhausted from a long day's journey of strenuous automobile travel) and lambasted him with such violence that her victim felt obliged to remove himself to anothe part of the room. She pursued him, however, continuing the attack until it disintegrated into a downpour of tears, at which time it seemed humane to withdraw the guest of honor from the party. Later on I asked her victim what reprehensible crime he had committed to provide the hurricane and learned that he had made the mistake of admitting that he had never read one of her best known novels.

There were times when the authors themselves were victims. When William Golding visited the Pennsylvania campus, he was followed relentlessly by a

young lady who was writing a senior thesis about his work and had a long list of questions she was determined to ask him. Everywhere he went she was certain to be there, waiting for her opportunity to hurl one of the questions at him. Many of the questions were those of a student on a symbol hunting safari. The questions were painful to Golding; often he was unable to recognize their relevance to what he had written. Like many fiction writers, he is appalled by the extent to which readers will dredge up symbols in passages where no symbolism was intended. After a while, mere sight of the young huntress, ever ready to shoot another question at him, would cause his eyes to gleam with the agony of a man under torture. It was this same young lady, by the way, who at one point vehemently disagreed with Golding about the theme of his novel, *Lord of the Flies*.

Another victimized writer was Archibald MacLeish, who narrowly escaped serious physical injury. It happened one evening when several thousand persons, who were eager to hear his poetry reading, were trying to get into an auditorium that held only eight hundred. Mr. MacLeish and those of us who had dined with him found the rear entrance locked when we arrived, and were obliged to use football tactics to advance to the only other entrance of the hall. There we were challenged by a stalwart guard blocking the entrance with a heavy chain. He let some of us through but mistook the poet for a gate crasher and in trying to prevent his entrance accidentally swung the heavy chain against his forehead. Fortunately, his skull remained intact and he was able to proceed with the reading.

The influence that a visiting writers program can have on students can never be measured, of course—not even by computers. However, we have noticed at the University of Pennsylvania that during the past five years there has been a steady and marked increase both in the number of students enrolling for courses in English and American literature and in the number that wish to take workshop courses in imaginative writing. How much of this development can be ascribed directly to the visiting writers program no one can say. We can only suspect from the many comments on the program volunteered by students that its influence must go deeply.

From my own impressionable undergraduate days I recall a ten minute experience with a poet which had a stronger influence on me than some of the semester-long courses I took with learned professors of literature. The experience marked the beginning of my interest in poetry—an interest which my grammar school teachers had successfully suppressed by using teaching techniques that were more suited to military camps than to the classroom; that is, by emphasizing memorization above understanding. The writer who inadvertently provided me with a fresh start in the appreciation of poetry was Edna St. Vincent Millay.

Miss Millay had come to the city of Syracuse for a poetry reading sponsored by some women's club. As a sophomore reporter on the Syracuse University daily who was anxious to win his spurs, I impulsively decided to make her the subject of my first interview. When I phoned her hotel for an appointment, her husband informed me that Miss Millay was bathing and could not come to the phone. In those days I was an unholy mixture of brashness and

shyness. The brash side of me soon triumphed, and going to her hotel I wrote her a note, the peculiar content of which was undoubtedly inspired by the popular myth that writers, especially one of Miss Millay's Greenwich Village reputation, are more brash than anyone else. My note expressed the hope that she had dried out from her bath by this time and could spare me a few minutes of her time. After what seemed like an eternity, the bellboy who had delivered the note returned with the news that Miss Millay would see me.

As I entered the hotel room, she looked up from her feet (her husband was in the act of putting on her shoes) and exclaimed: "So you're the writer of that note! I wondered what sort of a person would write such a thing." Having satisfied her curiosity, she made it clear that she had little time for me as she was already late for a dinner being given in her honor. She told me she could allow me only one question. In my desperate state of mind the only question that occurred to me was based on the boast of one of my professors that Edna St. Vincent Millay, who had been a student of his at Vassar, was influenced by his teachings when she wrote "Renascence," the poem that first won her national recognition.

I asked Miss Millay to what extent his claim was true. Without any hesitation, she replied that the professor had not influenced her in the slightest degree. And that was the end of the interview, except that my forlorn expression evoked such pity in her that before sending me on my way she inscribed her most recent collection of poems and presented me with the book. And so it was that I read Edna St. Vincent Millay for the first time and, enjoying her, began to read other poets, live ones and dead ones. Eventually I lost my resistance to poetry and even developed a love for it.

This testimonial is not offered as proof that all casual encounters with writers are as deeply rewarding. Today's college students are far more sophisticated than they were in my undergraduate days. Yet I don't think that any of us who have brought authors together with students can escape the observation that students are remarkably responsive to writers in the flesh. The high school and colleges that do not yet capitalize on this significant fact are missing an opportunity of bringing the English curriculum closer to the mainstream of living experience.

EVALUATION OF STUDENT COMPOSITION BY COMPUTER

By Arthur Daigon

First a disclaimer: In the course of speaking to professional groups around the country about the grading of compositions by computer, I seem to have gained the dubious reputation of "a computer man," "a mechanist," and, more expressively, "a herald of Orwellian nightmares," "a Huxlean decanterer of the creative spirit. The pervading mood of such gatherings may be characterized quite simply as hostile or at best, politely antagonistic." "Child Roland to the Dark Tower Came" is the leitmotif of these encounters betwen the Satan of I.B.M. and the seraphs of the humanistic spirit.

I really am most uncomfortable in the role of Satan. My undergraduate and graduate students will readily testify that I am really one of the "good guys." I am intensely concerned with the literary experience, with reconciling student taste to quality in literature, in an idea-centered curriculum, and in bringing to life in secondary school classrooms the liberal arts spirit of active inquiry.

In the interest of this liberal arts spirit, a spirit which hinges on the intellectual resources of human beings and their capacities to reach *judgments* on the basis of reason rather than emotion, I beg you not to fold, spindle, or mutilate the argument until you have considered the premises and their pedagogical implications.

"How can a machine possibly read and grade a composition?" This is the inevitable question asked by those first hearing about the research project currently supported by a grant from the United States Office of Education and initially financed by a grant from the College Entrance Examination Board. Keeping books and inventories, processing payrolls, assigning student programs, keeping a school register—these repetitive, arithmetic chores are now accepted as falling within the province of the computer. But reading and evaluating that complex symbolic process we call language surely must be a presumptuous incursion into realms strictly assigned to the human intellect. How indeed can, or dare, a machine compete in this area?

Before we discuss how a machine grades a student's composition, we should consider how a secondary school English teacher grades a composition—or rather, because there are many styles, or non-styles, of grading—how such a teacher *should* grade a composition. What should a teacher look for? What should he say? How should he say it? The teacher should see the paper before him as an opportunity to change the monologue of the composition into the dialogue of teaching. As he reads, the margins (if they are there) become the arena for comments concerning the idea, its support and application, the felicity of word choice and sentence structure, failure to observe linguistic etiquette—misspellings, punctuation errors, and solecisms of one sort or other. He should respond to the composition primarily as idea, challenging, enlarging, suggesting—indicating how the idea could be clarified through such a device, or how such a structure clouds meaning, or how such a word or phrase is inappropriate to the tone. His comments could read as follows: "Are you sure of

this?" "Better word needed here." "To what does this refer?" "Support this generalization." "Contradiction of earlier position." "Restructure this. I don't understand what you mean." "Check spelling." "Needless repetition." "This sentence is too long and complicated," and so on.

The teacher is then expected to make some pointed generalizations which indicate the overall strengths and weaknesses of the work and provide suggestions for improvement. A grade, or grades, are then assigned which purport to measure the content, organization, style, and mechanics. The paper is returned, and the student is expected to make revisions and, in general, take cognizance of the running commentary, the compliments, the suggestions for improvement, and the grade(s).

Even for the experienced teacher, a minimum of fifteen minutes per paper would be required for such grading. Bearing a 130-150 student load, typical for most teachers in public secondary schools, leaves the instructor a choice between less than minimal writing thoroughly graded and a reasonable amount of writing perfunctorily graded. And according to *The National Interest and The Continuing Education of Teachers* published by the National Council of Teachers of English, too many teachers carrying reasonable student loads (about 100 students)are poorly trained to deal with the composition except in the perfunctory manner. Such poorly graded papers may contain the following typical comments: "D This will never do." "90 Good." "85 Interesting paper." "75 Try harder. Watch your spelling." "F This is impossible." This, I submit, is not adequate composition grading.

It is because of this inadequacy of many teachers to deal with composition and the virtual suspension of coherent, sequential activities in the classrooms of overburdened English teachers, not to mention the notorious unreliability of composition graders, that computer essay grading should be considered. And it should be considered, not as a teacher replacement but ultimately as an aid to teachers struggling with an overwhelming mass of paper work, planning, meetings, reading, as a device which will, when fully developed, not only give the teacher significant data, but will facilitate the very "feedback" teachers say machines discourage.

If most English teachers were skilled in composition instruction and had time in which to grade compositions, there would be less need for computer help, but the fact is that many teachers know little about composition, and those who know much have little time to put their knowledge to work.

After two years of research and development the computer is ready to simulate the overall ratings of superior human judges of compositions written by secondary school students. This is the first step. In all probability the first practical application of composition grading by computer will be to tests of writing proficiency not returned to the writers, perhaps large scale testing of composition, which would merely require simulation of the single, evaluative end product of enlightened human judgment. Is the composition unacceptable, fair, good, or excellent? We are currently working on simulating human ratings of specific writing traits—content, organization, style, mechanics, and—get this one—creativity! The computer is, indeed, having difficulty evaluating creativ-

ity in the written work of students. This difficulty, however, does not stem from the shortcomings of the machine; rather it can be traced to the confusion our human graders experienced as they attempted to respond evaluatively to creativity. The machine merely simulated their confusion. Perhaps when humans clarify the concept of creativity for themselves, the machine will be able to proceed with this task.

In addition to work on simulating the human judgments of separate writing traits, the principal investigator, Professor Ellis Page, and his research team are currently implementing feedback programs, programs which will enable the machine to produce printed comments related to the stylistic and mechanical strengths and shortcomings in a given composition and to assign such homework assignment which would compensate for such shortcomings. But more of this later.

The key to understanding the basic strategy of computer grading resides in the concept of *simulation*. The computer does not apply some absolute grading system. It seeks rather to imitate the behavior of human graders by applying the same criteria used by these graders in their judgments of student prose. The following analogy may clarify somewhat the process of simulating human judgments.

Suppose we suggest to a group of acknowledged automotive experts that they evaluate by an A B C D scale an assorted collection of 100 cars appearing we will say, at the auto show in New York City. These experts may examine any and all of the features of the cars on display. They poke around under the hood, note engine displacements, number of cylinders, cam shafts, safety features, body design, and any other features which they feel to be indicative of quality. Being human, one may be more moved by wire wheels and bucket seats than another; one's subconscious is stirred by the color red, although his objective self knows that this is really irrelevant, and so on. In any case, the A B C D ratings by the experts are submitted. We are now prepared to begin simulating the experts judgments. We look at the characteristics of the A rated cars. Most of them had a certain range of engine displacement, certain common safety features, certain inside and outside measurements, etc. In the B rated automobiles these items played a role, but perhaps there were fewer safety features, perhaps engine displacements fell into a different range, or perhaps these cars were penalized because they were convertible or hardtop models. In the C group many of the A group characteristics were missing and other negative elements appeared—poor quality tires, inadequate braking, etc., and so on. Having cataloged the significant indicators of automotive quality, as laymen, we could go to a fresh batch of 100 autos, note their characteristics, and accurately predict how our skilled experts would rate them. This is the procedure that a layman could use to simulate the skilled judgment.

The computer uses this basic approach with one crucial twist. Because human beings respond kaleidoscopically to the myriad elements of writing, their judgments are in the main, intuitive and without specificity. They rarely count the occurrence of specific items. Their concept of style is qualitative and is a synthesis of many conscious and unconscious responses to stimuli of diction, syntax, figure, and the dynamic relationship of these to what is being said, to whom, and for what purpose.

The computer, on the other hand, is a counting machine. It cannot respond to "good organizational frameworks," "poor use of transitional elements," or "smooth-flowing style." The computer, if it is to simulate human judgments, must do so using its unique, non-human capacities.

We must, then, provide it with quantifiable *indicators* or correlates of the elements of composition to which humans respond intuitively. The problem becomes one of hypothesizing specific indicators or correlates of the smooth flowing sentence, the well-organized paragraph, the effective transition, and so on.

Our human simulators of automotive quality were able to apply the same criteria used by the automotive experts. The computer, however, must almost always rely on some quantifiable, discrete indicator of a given composition trait. After establishing the significance of these indicators—sentence length, sentence type, number of complex words, etc., we can predict how skilled human judges would rate a new set of papers, based on the presence or absence of the indicators.

Now that this process of similation has been outlined, we can consider how the machine examines the composition. Does the machine actually receive the finished white-lined composition paper into its maw and proceed to read letters, words, and sentences. Not quite, but almost!

Up to very recent developments in pattern-recognition technology, workers in the field of language data processing were faced with the "input problem"; that is, the machine could accept only punch-coded language data rather than the original data itself. Key punched versions of students' compositions had to be fed into our computer, each letter in the alphabet having its characteristic position on the familiar IBM data card. About 5-8 words could appear on a single card.

Within the last year, however, the optical recognition problem appears to have been solved. Optical scanning machines are now available which can "recognize" 110 different print faces at a rate of 1200 letters per second. Because handwriting is so idiosyncratic and human recognition of it is so often contextual, machine recognition of handwriting is not yet in sight.

What does the machine do with the composition after it, the composition, has been put into the machine? The machine responds to graphemes, that is, letters, and it can be "asked" by the programmer to identify and count preselected combinations of graphemes, which in themselves indicate to the machine, as well as to a human grader, strengths and weaknesses; errors in spelling and punctuation, solecisms, distinctive vocabulary, etc. Here the machine responds to errors much in the same manner as human graders do, and does not require indicators or correlates. If, for instance, we supply the computer with a dictionary of the one thousand misspellings which account for over 90 per cent of spelling errors, it, the computer, will be able to detect any such misspelled word when it appears on a composition it is grading.

An example or two will illustrate how punctuation can be checked. The machine can be directed to look for a comma after the appearance of the

graphemes Y-E-S (Yes) or N-O (No) when these grapheme combinations occur at the beginning of a sentence, as in "Yes, I think so." or "No, you are wrong." If the required comma has been omitted a notation is made. Or the machine can be programmed to search for a question mark at the close of sentences which begin with "how", "why", "would", "should", "will", etc.

Solecisms, or violations of approved usage, may be detected and recorded using the same technique. Graphemic combinations such as "don't hardly," "don't scarcely," "can't hardly," are discovered in much the same manner as are spelling errors, via the built in dictionary of anticipated errors. "Off of," "this here," "that there," "real good," (or "real bad," or "real interesting," or "real cute") can be noted as can innumerable other common usage violations: Anywheres, nowheres, anyways, hisself, theirselves, could of, should of, being as, being that, these or those kind, kind of a, sort of a, I swum, have drank, irregardless, etc. A program which detects over 200 trite expressions (sad but true, good as gold, truth is stranger than fiction) is based on a pre-selected dictionary stored in the computer memory.

A more difficult challenge is to have the machine distinguish between the uses of "there" and "their," the most common error in written usage. Correct usage, in this case, seemingly depends on the ability to make semantic discriminations, to apprehend meaning, something the machine cannot do. Here the machine abandons mere identification of anticipated grapheme combinations and moves on to their identification in given verbal environments, and makes a judgment about the appropriateness of the word in that environment. The machine is directed to note any instance where "their" is followed by auxiliary verbs such as: is, are, have, was, may, might, etc. Obviously such combinations, when they occur, must be considered errors. Moreover, the machine can be fed a list of common nouns which might ordinarily follow the possessive "their," such as books, teachers, hats, etc., and if any of these nouns followed "there" rather than "their," an error would be recorded.

This technique of judging the correctness of a form based upon its appearance in given verbal environments can be applied to the problems of "it's-its," "you're-your," "who's-whose," "whether-weather," stationery-stationary," "desert-dessert," etc. These examples illustrate how the computer uses non-human, that is, non-semantic processes to arrive to conclusions similar to those of human judges.

But, of course, proper punctuation, impeccable spelling, and avoidance of solecisms—proficiency in the area of linguistic etiquette—do not in themselves produce good prose. One may omit commas and question marks, spell atrociously, and even commit usage blunders and still, quite conceivably, write well. Any editor can testify to this.

The computer's concern with such errors may be defended because the computer's function is to *simulate* the ratings given by sophisticated human judges, ratings which, of course, in spite of their acknowledged superiority are subject to biases.

At present, it is in measurements related to style, that is the selection of words and their syntactic arrangement, that the computer can tell us most

about good, bad, or indifferent writing. Moreover, evaluation based primarily on stylistic considerations is particularly pertinent to the prose of secondary school students. Such students are still grappling with problems of immature style, a style still tied to barren vocabulary and simplistic syntactic structures, a style which is closely related to content in that inability to manipulate the forms and structures of English balks and frustrates content or meaning. That is to say, teachers grade compositions for the most part, in terms of their coherence and the students' ability to manipulate the conventional forms and structures of the language. And there seems to be, in the public secondary schools, at any rate, a direct relationship between such ability and the ability to produce what we call "content." The content seems to be more significant as the student becomes more articulate. A crude example might illustrate what I mean. When one of the old saws is assigned—"What I Did Last Summer" or "MY Ambition" the teacher is not really interested in the student's summer activities or his kaleidoscopic aspirations. Rather she is interested in his coherence, his ability to select words, and relate them in syntactically relevant structures, (what we call style) while observing the agreed upon conventions of spelling, punctuation, and usage. The areas of style and mechanics, then, provide us with key indicators of composition quality in the secondary school.

As noted previously, human response to style is intuitive and without specificity. The machine must make its evaluations on the basis of quantitative elements, elements hypothesized by its human programmer to be indicative of style or its absence. Unlike the human, the machine cannot respond to "smooth-flowing style," "well-constructed sentences," etc. It must count specific elements which are supposed to be related to smooth-flowing style or good sentence structure. The programmer knows that his choice of such specific stylistic indicators is right when the machine's grade, based on the presence or absence of such indicators in the composition, correlates significantly with the grade assigned by skilled human judges.

Clues to specific indicators of mature style were suggested by readability formulas, which attempt to predict the reading difficulty of prose selections based upon their comprehension by various groups of readers. The Lorge Formula, when applied to predicting the relative difficulty of prose selections, measures average sentence length, the number of prepositional phrases, number of "hard" words, (words not appearing on a standard list of common words). The Winnetka Formula determines comparative difficulty using the criteria of number of different words per 1000 word sample, number of prepositions, number of simple sentences in a 75 sentence sample, number of words not occurring on the Thorndike list of 10,000 words. Flesch measures average sentence length and average word length, that is the number of syllables per 100 word sample, and so on.

What was important to the investigators in Project Essay Grade was the assumption by the readability experts that readability could be gauged by objective measurements of stylistic elements, the words chosen and their syntactic arrangement. What was really implied was that both reading difficulty *and* maturity of style were under scrutiny. It seems self evident that the short declarative sentence of the subject verb pattern, devoid of phrasal, clausal, or parenthetical complexity, using only the most common words, omitting transi-

tional elements, and innocent of syntactical sophistication, could be associated with deficiency in style, as well as with ease of comprehension.

The next step was to determine whether the presence of these elements, and those involving spelling, punctuation, and correct usages previously described, would, singly or in combination, correlate with skilled human judgments of the prose selections in which these elements were found.

It should be noted that the compositions used were written by students in the eighth through twelfth grade, and each of the 276 compositions was graded by four skilled graders, the reliability of the pooled judgments registering a high .83.

An obvious problem arose. How does a machine recognize a declarative sentence? a clause? a phrase? a well-developed vocabulary? How does it distinguish a sentence beginning with a subject-verb pattern from a sentence beginning with a prepositional phrase, a gerund or a participle? The readability experts laboriously read, identified, and tallied each word and relevant syntactic structure in their limited prose samples. This approach was unreasonable for large numbers of student compositions.

The computer's basic approach to discovering the syntactic characteristics of a sentence has until recently depended on available lexical and punctuation clues. Words such as although, unless, if—subordinate conjunctions—signalled adverbial clauses. Relative pronouns, who, them, that, which, signalled relative clauses, when they appeared in certain positions in the sentence. A list of common prepositions signalled prepositional phrases except when such words were used adverbially. Ends of sentences were signalled by periods, question marks, or exclamation points. To determine whether the simple subject, the most common sentence opener was indeed the first word of a sentence and to establish the ratio of simple subject initiated sentences to non-subject initiated sentences were considerably more complicated. A dictionary of words had been stored in the computer, words which, as first words of sentences, signalled the subject opening pattern. These words are the determiners, a, an, the ,these, etc., personal pronouns, possessive pronouns, indefinite pronouns, all plural nouns, that is, any word which ends in "s" except such words as less, yes, across, as, etc., titles such as Mr., Dr., and certain other words which would indicate to the computer simple subject sentence openers. By employing such techniques, we determined the ratio of sentences using conventional syntax to those using more sophisticated approaches, such as beginning a sentence with prepositional, participial, or clausal structures.

Several weeks ago a parsing program developed at M.I.T. became available. This program not only assigns each word to its grammatical form class, but identifies the syntactic role of each word. In addition it identifies the various clause and phrase structures. All of this makes possible counts of occurrences and co-occurrences of innumerable grammatical and syntactical elements with the view to determining the relationships of these occurrences and co-occurrences to what is judged by human graders to be style.

One last example: an important index to style occurs in the area of diction, that is word choice or vocabulary. The machine counts all of those words

appearing on Dale's List of some 1000 common words which are fed into the computer's storage. The student's use of the uncommon word has thus far proved to be one of the most significant single predictors of the skilled human judgment, that is, a high negative correlation exists between the number of words on the common word list and favorable human ratings.

Very soon the machine will be able to make comments to students whose papers are returned. Based on what the computer can do already with mechanics and style, the time may not be too distant when the computer can actually print out something like the following: (It would take only a *small* addition to the present program to do most of this):

> "John, [we are told that using first names softens criticism] please correct the following misspellings: beleive, recieve. Note the ie, ei problem. You overuse the words interesting, good, nice; 'then' was repeated six times. Check trite expressions. All of your sentences are of the subject-verb variety and all are declarative. Many seem short and choppy. Reconstruct using appropriate connectives. Check subject-verb agreement in second paragraph. You had trouble with this in your last paper. Title lacking. Do the following related assignment for tomorrow, etc."

The computer *cannot* honestly say "I agree with you." "I disagree with you." "I was moved." "Your topic was sensitively handled." "I am reminded of a personal experience." "Your parents must be proud of you." "Figurative language especially effective," etc. It will, however, be able to print the all important directive, "Please see me," or, in view of the basic non-human nature of the machine, this could be amended to read "Please see the teacher."

Without being facetious or anti-humanistic, one could say that the failing in a human contending with student composition is that he is not enough like a machine, which can accurately and consistently respond to discernible elements of style without tiring perceptibly. And the failing of the present machine contending with the composition is that it is not enough like a human, who can respond to meaning, to logic (or its absence) to connotation, and to figurative language. Obviously, we cannot or should not expect English teachers to become more like machines. We can, however, attempt to make machines more human in their responses to substantive ideas, the "content" in the compositions of our students. The investigators in this area have already turned to the problem of machine response to *what* the student is writing about and his scheme of organization. The machine must be able to answer the questions: Did this student do what was assigned? Did he deal with the appropriate subject matter? Did he compare and contrast, if this was required? Did he supply details, expand a definition, relate cause and effect, use a chronological approach, if any of these organizational modes were part of, or appropriate to the assignment?

Answers to questions relating to the content of a given composition may be sought through use of a computer-stored thesaurus of selected words and phrases. The computer, responding to the presence or absence of this verbal evidence of subject involvement, could make a decision as to "content." A thesaurus for any given composition could be constructed either through an

anticipated list of words and phrases thought to be relevant or through a list of words and phrases gleaned from a sampling of superior compositions evaluated by skilled graders.

If, for instance, the composition topic were "Television, Boon or Curse," an anticipated thesaurus could consist of the things, actions and descriptive words which would indicate subject involvement. Some of the "things" might be news, commercials, drama, comedy, entertainment, taste, standards, majority, polls, violence, responsibility, popularity, etc. A list of action words would surely contain conform, demand, cater, insults, protest, enjoy, endure, switch, etc. Some relevant descriptive terms could be popular, dull, trite, provocative, relaxing, hilarious, repetitive, varied and so on.

These terms are merely a sampling of a thesaurus which could incorporate hundreds of additional words, phrases, and their synonyms and antonyms.

To determine a student's mode of organization, the detection of key words and phrases would modulate the computer's response. For instance, the presence of a significant number of words such as first, then, afterward, after, before, soon, at that point, during, by then, at last, finally, etc., could very well suggest a chronological mode of organization. Words such as consequently, as a result, thus, therefore, if, inevitably, reason, cause, result, etc., could indicate preoccupation with cause and effect. Comparison and contrast could be signalled by nevertheless, in spite of, on the other hand, however, in contrast, same as, different from, more than, less than, better than, worse than, etc. Purpose could be indicated by in order to, tried to, attempted to, wanted to, so that, goal, aim, intent, etc. Of course, these lists are exploratory and tentative and their usefulness will have to be confirmed through application to students' writing.

Here are some exciting possibilities being explored by the team of researchers at The University of Connecticut looking for answers to content and style conundrums.

1. Consider the possibility of a computer program which reduced the most complicated sentence to its Chomskian kernels, which are then compared to kernels already fed into the computer memory. This is one approach to determine the adequacy of content. That is, a composition comparing Aristotelean and modern tragedy would have its most convoluted sentences reduced to simple, declarative, active-voiced sentences which could be compared with the several hundred (or several thousand) anticipated as fulfilling the assignment and put into computer storage. Is this not a response to content?

2. We plan to use our parsing program to test the theories of stylists and rhetoricians which relate front loading and embedding to stylistic deficiency. (Front loading refers to the number of words separating subject and verb; embedding refers to excessive modification of clauses by other clauses). Further we intend to produce evidence to justify the objective description of individual styles of recognized authors. Is it predominately nominative, or verbal, or adjectival? How are clauses characteristically used? Are certain sound patterns preferred? . . . and so on.

3. We envision having the computer *learn* language as a baby learns. Rather than responding to a set of grammatical rules and an arbitrary parsing program, why can't the machine learn by ingesting great masses of language and come up inductively with the rules of syntax and style exemplified by this language? It could be programmed to look for recurring patterns, and combinations, idiosyncracies, etc. Admittedly, this last possibility is only a glint in a researcher's eye.

All over the country researchers in the humanities are using the computer to give them more time to employ their uniquely human talents. Concordances, for instance, are constructed by computers. Fewer and fewer scholars are plodding through masses of literary data to trace a word or pattern of words or a family of related words or a figurative cluster. The machine, in a few hours, can do the tedious counting and collating that human spent a lifetime doing, and the scholar's creative energies are released to evolve hypotheses, to make generalizations, and to suggest implications.

Several years ago 90 per cent of computer time was taken up with the solution of scientific-mathematical problems. Today more than half the time is given to language data processing—codifying the laws of a state, settling authorship disputes, charting figurative patterns in *Hamlet*, translating from one language to another, retrieving and abstracting information, charting sound patterns in the speech of various groups, generating random sentences as a check on generative grammar systems and so on.

A recent *New York Times* article told of a computer that produced free verse, blank verse, or rhymed verse—some of it indistinguishable from those produced by certain human poets.

Inevitably, when discussing the ideas and rationales of our composition grading project with teachers, students, and laymen, two distinct and powerful objections are voiced, usually with considerable hostility. Incidentally my last *billet-doux* beings "As an entering freshman at the University of Connecticut, I am nauseated by your article," and ends, "When a student's ideas, thoughts, and styles are reduced to mathematical formula, it is time to speak out."

The first of the two major objections is the familiar jeremiad, warning of *1984, Brave New World*, the abdication of human prerogatives, the decline of humanism, the impersonality of machines, and so on.

This category of objection must have had its origin just after paleolithic man discovered that a tool could do some jobs more efficiently than he himself could. It has been revived with tthe introduction of anything revolutionary from the automobile, washing machine and telephone to the printing press, fountain pens, and typewriters. I do not know whether this stems from an exaggerated nostalgia for a simpler past or a hyper-puritanism which suspects any mechanical replacement of what is considered to be a uniquely human function. Few of these critics, however, would willingly walk to the local shopping center or movie rather than hop into one of the two family cars; few would go beyond fond recollections of women washing clothes at the riverside and actually discard their washing machines; few would discard their telephones for more personal eye to eye contact with shopkeepers, neighbors, and relatives. We accept these

conveniences because they permit us to operate more effectively, thus giving us more time to do things more appropriate to our humanity.

The fact is that a human being can do anything a computer can do if he has almost unlimited time, energy, and patience. He can count words, clauses, calculate ratios and averages. But why not let a machine do this tedious work, if we agree that the results provide significant data concerning student writing? That it *does* provide such significant data is corroborated by the high correlation of its evaluations with those of trained human judges.

The other vehement objection to computer essay grading revolves about the word "creativity". What about the off-beat writer, the non-conforming stylist, the original thinker? Won't they do poorly in the cavernous maw of the computer? They will do no worse than the off-beat, the non-conforming, and the original do in most conventional English classrooms, and the machine will not necessarily penalize a creative writer for appearing in class needing a haircut and a bath during the greater part of the school year, looking at the teacher in a surly manner, or not being one of the "nice" conventional students in the class. The computer will ignore the halo effect from personal characteristics which are uncorrelated with the programmed measurements. It may even be possible to instruct the computer to recommend a human reading if the structure and choice of language is markedly atypical.

The point is that "creativity" is suffering monumental abuse at the hands of those overburdned or untalented teachers who merely scan a paper, assign a number or letter grade, and write an innocuous comment or two. Certainly, such approaches to composition, and they are in the majority, do little to promote creativity. The machine can do no worse; perhaps it can provide overworked teachers with the time and the data required for individualized human teaching of any student, the creative as well as the inarticulate.

What about the possibility of students conning the machine? What will stop them from writing long sentences filled with irrelevant polysyllabic words, phrases, and clauses, all key indicators of stylistic refinement? This was indeed done by a facetious *Newsweek* reported in his spoofing account of the project.

Such shenanigans would quickly be detected by the machine, which conceivably, could be programmed to print out a no-nonsense reprimand. Built into our computer program is the element of *curvilinearity*. The presence of each of the key indicators is not sufficient to merit positive notice. If, for instance, too many polysyllabic words are detected, the machine's grade will reflect this fact and announce it in the print-out. The same strictures apply to the other indicators. The computer's program looks not only for significant indicators, but it is sensitive to both their optimum and disproportionate employment.

And finally—what uses and abuses can be expected of computer grading of students' prose? I assume there will be those supervisors and classroom teachers who will view the advent of the computer as an opportunity to abdicate all responsibilities to the composition program. They might feel justified in feeding in the papers, returning them to students, and proceeding to the next section of the grammar workbook. Although their writing program will have

deteriorated, their leisure time patterns would certainly begin to resemble those of the general population.

Teachers should view the computer as a fountainhead of relevant data concerning the writing behavior of their students, data which should profoundly affect their establishment of instructional priorities. If the machine suggests that sentence sense is a problem, the teacher devotes her instructional energies to sentence sense—or to punctuation, or to subject-verb agreement, or to combining short, choppy sentences, and so on. Or she may do what everyone talks about but few teachers manage, and that is individualize instruction, offer appropriate counsel, drill, and home assignment to individuals and groups in need of such specialized aid, aid signalled by the computer's profile of the writing patterns of separate individuals and of an entire group. Most teachers inflict instruction in a given skill on all, regardless of need, because that is the next chapter in the textbook, or because it is called for by the printed curriculum, or because that is the way it always has been done. Talk about dehumanization!

The computer then will ease the grading burden, but if reasonably employed, will sharpen insights and focus instructional concern on the special writing needs of individual students, and consequently, demand more relevant and better planned teaching activities.

And this, indeed, would be the final irony—the mechanical, impersonal monster, the humanists' anathema, becoming the instrument of more personal, more individualized, yes, more humanized teaching in our secondary schools.